

## Statements & Press Releases

### **STATEMENT FROM ROD PAIGE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION**

Statement on International Education Week 2003  
Washington, D.C.  
June 2003

I am pleased to invite you to participate in the fourth annual International Education Week, November 17-21, 2003, jointly sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Education.

Since the inception of International Education Week in November 2000, Americans have experienced several world events that should leave us with little doubt that we are living in an interconnected world. The need for understanding other cultures, languages, and global issues has become increasingly more significant. We should do our very best to give our students the skills they need to be successful global citizens.

To better understand this new 21st century world, we need to expose our children to languages, cultures and the challenges outside our borders. We must teach our students to understand world issues and their connections to them. One way to do this is to nurture excellent reading habits. Reading is an important skill that all children should master by the end of the third grade. Armed with the ability to read and write well early in their education, children will be able to climb the ladder of learning successfully, and after all, that is what we are trying to achieve when we say that no child will be left behind.

On one hand, reading can be seen as a daily tool that all of us need to advance our learning and to help our children build the knowledge and the ability necessary to progress from grade to grade. On the other hand, reading can also be a very sophisticated and powerful tool, which can open up a new world for all our children.

Children can use their reading skills to read about the cultures and traditions not only of their own country but also of others in the global community. They can use their reading skills to navigate the Internet, learn about world affairs, and even pave the way to learning another language-or perhaps two or three or more. During this year's International Education Week, let us each read at least one book by a foreign author and experience life in another culture through the words of those whose experiences are different from ours.

International Education Week 2003 is a time to celebrate the diversity of America and the many different cultures, languages and traditions that make up our global community. I invite you to log on to [exchanges.state.gov](http://exchanges.state.gov) or stay informed about International Education Week 2003 by joining the listserv. Please go to [exchanges.state.gov/iew/involved/maillinglist.htm](http://exchanges.state.gov/iew/involved/maillinglist.htm) for instructions. For general information about international education activities and programs at the U.S. Department of Education, please visit <http://www.ed.gov/international/>.

There are many wonderful ways to commemorate International Education Week. No matter which ones you choose, I know this experience will enrich your life and those of your students.

Rod Paige